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ABSTRACT

To assess opinions among members of the education networks of the Sisters of Mercy, a 4-part, 45-item questionnaire was distributed in 1986. Respondents represented higher education, secondary education, and elementary education. Results from major superiors of the Union and its nine provinces and each of the independent congregations are reported separately. Of the 507 questionnaires mailed, 336 were returned for a response rate of 72 percent. This monograph presents tables of data and discussions about respondents; institutional involvement; values, collaboration, and sponsorship; and future directions. Respondents reflected shared values and belief in their educational mission. Recommendations drawn from five opinion categories include the following: (1) Concerning charism, administrators should ensure placement of sisters in ministries that serve the poor and the ability of some poor to attend Mercy-sponsored institutions. Concern for women and for excellence should continue. (2) Regarding sponsorship, development of a lay leadership as teachers and administrators is needed and greater support of nonsponsored educational ministries should be given. (3) Regarding networking, greater involvement is needed with other Catholic educational institutions and among the three Mercy-sponsored groups. (4) Concerning collaboration, sponsorship of alternative educational settings and a common focus for sisters in education are desirable. (5) Concerning "system," the union should sponsor needed institutions and systems similar to health care ministries for Mercy educational institutions. (CJH)

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A Study of Opinions & Attitudes of the Sisters of Mercy

MEMBERS OF

MERCY HIGH EDUCATION COLLOQUIUM

MERCY SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MERCY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION NETWORK

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Foreword

Through 155 years of service the Sisters of Mercy have already written an eloquent record of the strength of their convictions about education as a work of mercy. The research presented in this volume adds to that testimony. The mere fact that responses came from such a high percentage of those surveyed bespeaks the energy and commitment with which today's Mercy educators carry on the tradition.

The heart and the hope of their insights would seem contained in a resounding affirmation found here that "Mercy educational institutions remain one of the most effective means of evangelization available" (92% agreement). This belief is complemented by the equally important and similarly strong assertion (by 88%) that "Mercy educational institutions have kept pace with the changing needs of the church and society."

This is a study of opinions and attitudes of the members of the education networks of the Sisters of Mercy: The Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, the Mercy Secondary Education Association, and the Mercy Elementary Education Network. If the data reflect a measure of bias toward educational institutions, it is perhaps understandable. Yet the respondents clearly recognize and appreciate the broader efforts encompassed by the phrase "educational ministries."

Among the findings reported here there is ample evidence of strongly held shared values—an inviting starting point for channeling future educational energies of Sisters of Mercy. At the same time, many answers have generated new questions, and these point up areas for further specific exploration. Why the gap between what respondents perceive as good and what they perceive as possible? Which of these gaps might the Sisters of Mercy have the corporate determination to try to close? What were the respondents' operative definitions of words like "collaboration," "networking," "coordination"? How do the views reflected here correlate with the opinions and attitudes of other educational practitioners, especially lay colleagues and other Sisters of Mercy?

As the Mercy Administrative Team who commissioned this research now offers the report to all interested parties, we do so with full realization that the work is seminal and requires much discussion, reflection,

probing. The recommendations, especially, are the result of a quantitative analysis that needs the enrichment of qualitative analysis. For our part, we intend to move these recommendations to arenas where such qualitative analysis may take place. We invite your continued cooperation in this process and welcome your suggestions and critical reflections.

One of the best known persons in Mercy educational circles was our chief collaborator on this project. Lourdes Sheehan, RSM, shepherded the work through its many phases from concept to conclusion, bringing to bear her wealth of personal experience and her recognized expertise in Catholic education. She deserves, and has, our gratitude.

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December 1986

Purpose

To assess the opinions and attitudes of the Sisters of Mercy in education, three educational groups were surveyed in the Spring of 1986. The groups included were current members of the Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, Mercy Secondary Education Association, and Mercy Elementary Education Network. The Major Superiors of the Union and its nine provinces and of each of the Independent Congregations are included among the members and are reported separately.

Survey Methodology and Recognition

The director for the entire project was Lourdes Sheehan, R.S.M. In March, 1986, she and Stephen O'Brien, a doctoral candidate at Virginia Tech and a member of the staff at the NCEA, developed the four-part, 45 item questionnaire. She validated the questionnaire by sending it to some members of the executive committees of the Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, the Mercy Secondary Education Association, and the Mercy Elementary Education Network.

In May, 1986, Sister Lourdes mailed the questionnaire to the entire population of the three educational groups and to the major superiors of the union and the congregations. There was a response rate of seventy-two percent (72.2%) from the 507 survey instruments distributed.

In September, 1986, Mary Bender, a doctoral candidate in statistics at Virginia Tech, analyzed the data through SPSSx, wrote the report, and made the recommendations based on the data. Stephen O'Brien edited the report and wrote the summary.

A delination of the surveys mailed and the responses received by each group is as follows:

	NUMBER MAILED	NUMBER RECEIVED	PERCENT OF RESPONSE
Major Superiors (MS)	29	18	62.1%
Mercy Higher Education Colloquium (MHEC)	224	163	72.8%
Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA)	96	71	74.0%
Mercy Elementary Education Network (MEEN)	158	114	72.2%
TOTAL	507	366	72.2%

Surveys were mailed to Sister of Mercy members across the United States. Response by area of the country is as follows: (Percentages reflect the distributions within educational groups.)

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
New England	5	49	10	7	71
	27.8%	30.1%	14.1%	6.1%	19.4%
Mid-East	8	78	29	52	167
	44.4%	47.9%	40.8%	45.6%	45.6%
Great Lakes	1	24	19	31	75
	5.6%	14.7%	26.8%	27.2%	20.5%
Plains	3	4	3	6	16
	16.7%	2.5%	4.3%	5.3%	4.4%
Southeast	0	5	6	9	20
	0%	3.1%	8.5%	7.9%	5.5%
West	1	3	4	9	17
	5.6%	1.8%	5.6%	7.9%	4.6%
				TOTAL	366
					100%

The areas of greatest response were the Mid-East (45.6%), the Great Lakes (20.5%), and New England (19.4%).

A χ^2 of 48.00048 (with 15 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000) indicates there is a difference among educational groups in regard

to areas of the country. There were fewer MEEN respondents from New England and MHEC respondents from the Great Lakes than expected, and more MEEN respondents from the Great Lakes and MHEC respondents from New England than expected.

Statistical Analysis

For each research question, frequencies were run on the computer utilizing SPSSx to assess the percentages of responses. Means and year breakdowns were then determined for the three questions where the respondent was to indicate a specific number of years.

To delineate differences among the educational groups on each question, crosstabs were run. For each crosstab, a χ^2 statistic and corresponding probability were given to determine the group differences. Expected values were included to ascertain where differences lay.

Additional crosstabs (with χ^2) were also run between corresponding sections of each question in Parts III and IV of the survey. In Part III, opinions whether a value should exist and does exist were compared; and in Part IV, the desirability and probability of situations were analyzed.

Survey Results

PART I

The first section of the four-part survey requested background information of respondents. Specific questions and responses follow.

1. To Which Province/Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy do you belong?

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
UNION PROVINCES					
Baltimore	0	13	10	6	29
	0%	8.0%	14.1%	5.3%	7.9%
Chicago	0	13	6	3	22
	0%	8.0%	8.5%	2.6%	6.0%
Cincinnati	1	4	4	8	17
	5.6%	2.5%	5.6%	7.0%	4.7%
Detroit	0	6	9	28	43
	0%	3.7%	12.7%	24.6%	11.8%
New York	1	4	3	1	9
	5.6%	2.5%	4.2%	.9%	2.5%
Omaha	1	5	2	0	8
	5.6%	3.1%	2.8%	0%	2.2%
Providence	1	19	3	4	27
	5.6%	11.7%	4.2%	3.5%	7.4%
St. Louis	1	4	2	2	9
	5.6%	2.5%	2.8%	1.8%	2.5%
Scranton	1	24	1	3	29
	5.6%	14.8%	1.4%	2.6%	7.9%
Worcester	1	0	0	0	1
	5.6%	0%	0%	0%	.3%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
CONGREGATIONS					
Albany	1	0	2	1	4
	5.6%	0%	2.8%	.9%	1.1%
Auburn	1	0	0	0	1
	5.6%	0%	0%	0%	.3%
Belmont	0	2	1	3	4
	0%	1.2%	1.4%	2.6%	1.6%
Brooklyn	0	3	1	3	7
	0%	1.9%	1.4%	2.6%	1.9%
Buffalo	1	2	1	4	8
	5.6%	1.2%	1.4%	3.5%	2.2%
Burlingame	0	2	2	5	9
	0%	1.2%	2.8%	4.4%	2.5%
Burlington	0	1	0	0	1
	0%	.6%	0%	0%	.3%
Cedar Rapids	1	0	0	3	4
	5.6%	0%	0%	2.6%	1.1%
Erie	1	4	1	4	10
	5.6%	2.5%	1.4%	3.5%	2.7%
Philadelphia	0	9	8	22	39
	0%	5.6%	11.3%	19.3%	10.7%
Pittsburgh	0	8	3	1	12
	0%	4.9%	4.2%	.9%	3.3%
Plainfield	1	17	1	4	23
	5.6%	10.5%	1.4%	3.5%	6.3%
Portland	1	3	2	1	7
	5.6%	1.9%	2.8%	.9%	1.9%
Rochester	2	0	4	6	12
	11.1%	0%	5.6%	5.3%	3.3%
W. Hartford	1	12	5	2	20
	5.6%	7.4%	7.0%	1.8%	5.5%
Windham	1	7	0	0	8
	5.6%	4.3%	0%	0%	2.2%
(1 missing observation)				TOTAL	365
					100%

The overall representation of respondents by province or congregation is listed above. A χ^2 of 190.82496 (with 75 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000 shows there is a very significant difference among groups. Because there are so many response categories, it is more beneficial to look at province and congregations listed the most frequently by the educational groups than to assess observed versus expected values. Those provinces and congregations indicated most frequently include:

MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	Scranton 24 (14.8%)	Baltimore 10 (14.1%)	Detroit 28 (24.6%)	Detroit 43 (11.8%)
	Providence 19 (11.7%)	Detroit 9 (12.7%)	Philadel. 22 (19.3%)	Philadel. 39 (10.7%)
	Plainfield 17 (10.5%)	Philadel. 8 (11.3%)	Cincinnati 8 (7.0%)	Baltimore Scranton 29 (7.9%)
	Baltimore Chicago 13 (8.0%)	Chicago 6 (8.5%)	Baltimore Rochester 6 (5.3%)	Providence 27 (7.4%)
Major Sup. were dist. across prov. and congreg. with no areas of concentration	(over half, 53% from those five locations)	(almost half, 46.6% from those four locations)	(over three-fifths, 61.5% from those five locations)	(45.7% from those five locations)

2. How Many Years Since Your First Profession?

The average number of years indicated was 29.7444. The average by educational group includes:

		MODE	STANDARD DEVIATION
MS	30.889 years	30 years	7.194
MHEC	32.845 years	26 years	10.496
MSEA	28.704 years	23 years	8.636
MEEN	25.796 years	16 years	10.756

Years since the first profession can be broken down into ranges, as indicated by the four groups:

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
0-9	0	6	1	6	13
	0%	3.7%	1.4%	5.3%	3.6%
10-19	2	7	9	25	43
	11.1%	4.3%	12.7%	21.9%	11.7%
20-29	4	52	29	48	133
	22.2%	31.9%	40.8%	42.1%	36.3%
30-39	10	55	26	24	115
	55.6%	33.7%	36.6%	21.1%	31.4%
40-49	2	33	5	6	46
	11.1%	20.2%	7.0%	5.3%	12.6%
50 years	0	10	1	5	16
and above	0%	6.1%	1.4%	4.4%	4.4%
				TOTAL	366
					100%

Across all groups, over two-thirds (67.7%) of the respondents indicated their first profession had been between twenty and thirty years ago. While the major superiors indicated most frequently (55.6%) that their first profession had been between thirty and thirty-nine years ago, MESA and MEEN members most frequently specified it had been between twenty and twenty-nine years, and MHEC members were divided between the two ranges.

3. Current Ministry

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
A. Elementary School					
RSM sponsored	0	1	0	6	7
	0%	.6%	0%	5.3%	1.9%
Parish/Diocesan	0	1	0	84	85
	0%	.6%	0%	73.7%	23.2%
Other	1	1	0	3	5
	5.6%	.6%	0%	2.6%	1.4%
B. Secondary School					
RSM sponsored	0	2	46	0	48
	0%	1.2%	64.8%	0%	13.1%
Parish/Diocesan	0	0	9	0	9
	0%	0%	12.7%	0%	2.5%
Other	0	0	1	0	1
	0%	0%	1.4%	0%	.3%
C. College/University					
RSM sponsored	0	88	0	0	88
	0%	54.0%	0%	0%	24.0%
Other Catholic	0	25	0	0	25
	0%	15.3%	0%	0%	6.8%
Other	0	13	0	0	13
	0%	8.0%	0%	0%	3.6%
D. Other					
Province/ Congregation Administration	16	9	10	3	38
	88.9%	5.5%	14.1%	2.6%	10.4%
Diocesan Education Office	0	0	1	11	12
	0%	0%	1.4%	9.6%	3.3%
Other	1	23	4	7	35
	5.6%	14.1%	5.6%	6.1%	9.6%
				TOTAL	366
					100%

As expected, members of MHEC, MSEA, and MEEN indicated their current ministry to be at their respective levels, college/university, secondary, and elementary. A χ^2 of 719.83459 (with 33 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000) clearly indicates group differences.

MHEC
College/University

	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (on college/university alone)
RSM sponsored	88	69.8%
Other Catholic	25	19.8%
Other	13	10.3%
TOTAL	126	99.9% rounded to 100.0%

Over two-thirds (69.8%) of those members of MHEC who indicated their present ministry is in a college or university represent an RSM sponsored college or university.

MSEA
Secondary School

	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (on secondary school alone)
RSM sponsored	46	82.1%
Parish/Diocesan	9	16.1%
Other	1	1.8%
TOTAL	56	100%

Over four-fifths (82.1%) of MSEA members who specified their current ministry is in a secondary school represent an RSM sponsored secondary school.

MEEN
Elementary School

	COUNT	PERCENTAGE (on elementary school alone)
RSM sponsored	6	6.5%
Parish/Diocesan	84	90.2%
Other	3	3.2%
TOTAL	93	99.9% rounded to 100%

The majority (90.2%) of elementary schools represented by MEEN members are parish/diocesan sponsored.

MS

The majority (88.9%) of major superiors indicated their current ministry is in province or congregational administration.

4. Present Position

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
Teacher/Faculty Member	0 0%	82 50.3%	16 22.5%	22 19.3%	120 32.8%
Administrator of Educational Institution	0 0%	35 21.5%	35 49.3%	68 59.6%	138 37.7%
Other	18 100%	46 28.2%	20 28.2%	24 21.1%	108 29.5%
				TOTAL	366 100%

Members of MSEA (49.3%) and MEEN (59.6%) were most likely to be administrators of an educational institution. MHEC members (50.3%) were most likely to be a teacher or faculty member, and the major superiors' position fell completely under "other" (100%). In most instances, "other" represented provincial administrator, congregational administrator, superior general, or major superior.

A χ^2 of 98.23904 (with 6 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000) indicates there is a difference in present position by group. The chart below shows the discrepancies between expected and observed frequencies. There were more teachers/faculty members for MHEC than expected, more administrators for MSEA and MEEN than expected, and more "other" for MS than expected. On the other hand, there were fewer teacher/faculty members for MS, MSEA, and MEEN than expected, and fewer "other" for MEEN than expected.

Observed vs. Expected

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEA
Teacher/faculty	−5.9	+28.6	−7.3	−15.4
Administrators	−6.8	−26.5	+8.2	+25
Other	+12.7	−2.1	−1	−9.6

5. Number of Years of Ministry in Formal Educational Institutions

The average number of years of ministry in formal education indicated was 25.956. The average by groups includes:

		MODE	STANDARD DEVIATION
MS	19.278 years	13 years	9.975
MHEC	28.182 years	20 years	11.913
MSEA	25.014 years	30 years	9.072
MEEN	24.491 years	16 years	9.635

A breakdown of years, as indicated by groups is as follows:

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
0-9	3	14	2	3	22
	16.7%	8.6%	2.8%	2.6%	6.0%
10-19	9	27	18	32	86
	50.0%	16.6%	25.4%	28.1%	23.5%
20-29	3	51	28	49	131
	16.7%	31.3%	39.4%	43.0%	35.8%
30-39	3	40	19	20	82
	16.7%	24.5%	26.8%	17.5%	22.4%
40-49	0	24	4	7	35
	0%	14.7%	5.6%	6.1%	9.6%
50 years and over	0	7	0	3	10
	0%	4.3%	0%	2.6%	2.7%
				TOTAL	366
					100%

For members of all groups, except major superiors, the most frequently indicated (35.8%) range for the number of years of ministry in formal educational institutions was twenty to twenty-nine years. The ranges ten to nineteen years and thirty to thirty-nine years were indicated the next most frequently, with major superiors and MEEN members falling in the lower years category, MHEC members falling in the higher years category and MSEA members distributed rather evenly between the two. A χ^2 of 38.17591 (with 15 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0008) further reflects these group differences.

6. Within the last fifteen years have you served fulltime in other than an educational institution?

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
Yes	16	61	23	21	121
	88.9%	37.4%	32.4%	18.8%	33.2%
No	2	102	48	91	243
	11.1%	62.6%	67.6%	81.3%	66.8%
(2 missing observations)				TOTAL	364
					100%

One-third (33.2%) of the respondents has served fulltime in other than an educational institution. Members of MEEN are the least likely (18.8%) to have done so and major superiors are the most likely (88.9).

A χ^2 of 37.02352 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000) further indicates differences among groups. More major superiors and fewer MEEN members than expected answered "yes," and fewer MS and a greater number of MEEN members than expected responded "no" to the question. The average length of time indicated by those respondents who answered "yes" to the above question was 6.607 years. The average by each group includes:

		MODE	STANDARD DEVIATION
MS	10.813 years	15 years	3.920
MHEC	6.311 years	2,3 years	4.742
MSEA	6.826 years	2,3,5 years	5.797
MEEN	4.136 years	4 years	4.063

A breakdown of years, as indicated by groups is as follows:

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
0-5 years	3	134	60	110	307
	16.7%	82.2%	84.5%	96.5%	83.9%
6-10 years	7	18	7	3	35
	38.9%	11.0%	9.9%	2.6%	9.6%
11-15 years	8	9	2	0	19
	44.4%	5.5%	2.8%	0%	5.2%
16-20 years	0	1	1	1	3
	0%	.6%	1.4%	.9%	.8%
21 years and over	0	1	1	0	2
	0%	.6%	1.4%	0%	.5%
				TOTAL	366
					100%

Over four-fifths (83.9%) of respondents across all groups except major superiors, who indicated they have served fulltime in other than an educational institution, specified they had done so for five years or less. While a number of major superiors (38.9%) fell in the six to ten year category, an even greater percentage (44.4%) fell in the 11-15 year category.

A very significant χ^2 of 96.59482 (with 12 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0000) further indicates the group differences.

Survey Results

PART II

The second section of the questionnaire was designed to discover opinions regarding the Sister of Mercy's involvement in formal educational institutions. Questions in Part II, as well as Parts III and IV, were further categorized into five different subject areas:

CHARISM
SPONSORSHIP
NETWORKING
COLLABORATION
SYSTEM

Response to questions in Parts II, III, and IV will be delineated by subject.

Charism

There were no statistically significant differences among groups in Part II of the survey, as related to *Charism*.

Q10. Province/congregation administrators have an obligation to ensure that some Sisters of Mercy are in educational ministries that directly serve the materially poor.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	2	24	14	11	51
Disagree	11.1%	15.2%	20.3%	9.8%	14.3%
	16	134	55	101	306
Agree	88.9%	84.8%	79.7%	90.2%	85.7%
(9 missing observations)				TOTAL	357
					100%

Although members across all groups (85.7%) said they agree that province/congregation administrators have an obligation to ensure that some Sisters of Mercy are in educational ministries that directly serve the materially poor, MSEA members are slightly less likely (79.7%) to agree.

Q24. Personal service in education is an important contribution to the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	0	2	0	1	3
Disagree	0%	1.3%	0%	.9%	.8%
	18	158	69	110	355
Agree	100%	98.8%	100.0%	99.1%	99.2%
(8 missing observations)				TOTAL	358
					100%

Respondents across all groups (99.2%) indicated that they agree that personal service in education is an important contribution to the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

Q25. Province/congregation administrators have an obligation to ensure that some people who are materially poor can attend Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	0	8	6	4	18
Disagree	0%	5.0%	8.5%	3.6%	5.0%
	18	151	65	108	342
Agree	100.0%	95.0%	91.5%	96.4%	95.0%
(6 missing observations)				TOTAL	360
					100%

The great majority (95%) of respondents across all groups agrees that province/congregation administrators have an obligation to ensure that some people who are materially poor can attend Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

Sponsorship

There were statistically significant differences among groups in three of the seven questions in Part II of the survey, as related to sponsorship. Specific significance will be reported with the question.

Q9. The primary responsibility for all institutional educational ministries should remain at the province/congregation level.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	2	28	6	19	55
Disagree	11.1%	17.8%	9.1%	17.4%	15.7%
	16	129	60	90	296
Agree	88.9%	82.2%	90.9%	82.6%	84.3%
(16 missing observations)				TOTAL	350
					100%

Respondents (84.3%) indicated they agree that the primary responsibility for all educational institutions should remain at the province/congregational level.

Q12. Coordination of educational ministries is the responsibility of province/congregation administration.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	2	54	18	21	95
Disagree	13.3%	35.5%	27.7%	20.0%	28.2%
	13	98	47	84	242
Agree	86.7%	64.5%	72.3%	80.0%	71.8%
(29 missing observations)				TOTAL	337
					100%

Over two-thirds (71.8%) of the respondents indicated that they agree that coordination of educational ministries is the responsibility of province/congregation administration. While major superiors were most likely to agree (86.7%), members of MHEC were the least likely (64.5%). A significant χ^2 of 9.16394 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0272) further reflects this difference. MEEN members were more likely to agree than expected (84 as opposed to 75.4) and MHEC members less likely (98 as opposed to 109.2).

Q15. The future of the free-standing Mercy-sponsored educational institution is limited.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	8	57	26	36	127
Disagree	50.0%	37.7%	38.8%	36.4%	38.1%
	8	94	41	63	206
Agree	50.0%	62.3%	61.2%	63.6%	61.9%
(33 missing observations)				TOTAL	333
					100%

Three-fifths (61.9%) of the respondents indicated that they agree that the future of the free-standing Mercy-sponsored educational institution is limited. Major superiors were divided evenly on the question.

Q21. Mercy educational institutions remain one of the most effective means of evangelization.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	2	19	3	6	30
Disagree	11.1%	11.9%	4.3%	5.5%	8.4%
	16	140	67	104	327
Agree	88.9%	88.1%	95.7%	94.5%	91.6%
(9 missing observations)				TOTAL	358
					100%

The majority (91.6%) of respondents indicated that they agree that Mercy educational institutions remain one of the most effective means of evangelization.

Q22. Mercy educational institutions have kept pace with the changing needs of the church and society.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	4	24	2	13	42
Disagree	23.5%	15.3%	2.9%	11.8%	12.2%
	13	133	67	97	310
Agree	76.5%	84.7%	97.1%	88.2%	87.8%
(13 missing observations)				TOTAL	353
					100%

Respondents (87.8%) said they agree that Mercy educational institutions have kept pace with the changing needs of the church and society.

Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant difference among groups, as indicated by χ^2 of 9.03337 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0289). MSEA members agreed with the statement more frequently than expected (67 as opposed to 60.6), and MHEC members disagreed more frequently than expected (24 as opposed to 19.1).

Q23. The Sisters of Mercy as a province/congregation are committed to Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	4	41	4	22	71
Disagree	23.5%	25.8%	5.6%	20.6%	20.1%
	13	118	67	85	283
Agree	76.5%	74.2%	94.4%	79.4%	79.9%
(12 missing observations)				TOTAL	354
					100%

Respondents (79.9%) said they agree that the Sisters of Mercy as a province/congregation are committed to Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

A χ^2 of 12.61149 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0056) indicates there is a difference among groups. While MHEC members agreed less frequently than expected (118 as opposed to 127.1), there was even a larger discrepancy for MSEA members who agreed more frequently than expected (67 as opposed to 56.8).

Q26. A priority among the Sisters of Mercy in education should be the preparation and incorporation of lay colleagues.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	0	5	3	2	10
Disagree	0%	3.1%	4.2%	1.8%	2.8%
	18	155	68	107	350
Agree	100.0%	96.9%	95.8%	98.2%	97.2%
(6 missing observations)				TOTAL	360
					100%

Respondents (97.2%) across all groups indicated that they agree that a priority among the Sisters of Mercy in education should be the preparation and incorporation of lay colleagues.

Networking

There were no statistically significant differences among educational groups in Part II of the survey as related to networking.

Q7. The current networking effort of the Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, Mercy Secondary Education Association, and Mercy Elementary Education Network should be encouraged.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	0	5	2	1	8
Disagree	0%	3.2%	2.8%	.9%	2.2%
	18	153	69	110	350
Agree	100.0%	96.8%	97.2%	99.1%	97.8%
(8 missing observations)				TOTAL	358
					100%

Respondents (97.8%) across all groups said they agree that the current networking effort of the MHEC, MSEA, and MEEN should be encouraged.

Q11. The coordination of educational ministries should be left to voluntary associations of Sisters of Mercy (for example, Mercy Higher Education Colloquium).

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	11	84	38	58	191
Disagree	68.8%	54.5%	55.9%	56.3%	56.0%
	5	70	30	45	150
Agree	31.3%	45.5%	44.1%	43.7%	44.0%
(25 missing observations)				TOTAL	341
					100%

Over half (56.0%) of the respondents, especially major superiors (68.8%), indicated they disagree that the coordination of educational ministries should be left to voluntary associations of Sisters of Mercy.

Q13. The coordination of educational ministries should be delayed until a decision is made regarding "Mercy Futures."

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	12	109	51	79	251
Disagree	66.7%	70.3%	72.9%	73.1%	71.5%
	6	46	19	29	100
Agree	33.3%	29.7%	27.1%	26.9%	28.5%
(15 missing observations)				TOTAL	531
					100%

Just under three-fourths (71.5%) of the respondents said they disagree that the coordination of educational ministries should be delayed until a decision is made regarding "Mercy Futures."

Q18. Involvement in one of the educational networks gives one mutual support and encouragement from colleagues in education.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	0	4	1	4	9
Disagree	0%	2.5%	1.4%	3.8%	2.6%
	17	155	69	102	343
Agree	100.0%	97.5%	98.6%	96.2%	97.4%
(14 missing observations)				TOTAL	352
					100%

The majority (97.4%) of respondents indicated that they agree that involvement in one of the educational networks gives one mutual support and encouragement from colleagues in education.

Q19. A reason for being a member of a Mercy network in education includes a conviction that the future will require more collaboration and planning among the levels of education.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	1	8	3	4	16
Disagree	5.6%	5.0%	4.3%	3.6%	4.5%
	17	153	67	106	343
Agree	94.4%	95.0%	95.7%	96.4%	95.5%
(7 observations missing)				TOTAL	359
					100%

Most (95.5%) of the respondents indicated that they agree that a reason for being a member of a Mercy network in education includes a conviction that the future will require more collaboration and planning among the levels of education.

Collaboration

There were no statistically significant differences among groups in Part II of the survey as related to collaboration.

Q8. A coordinated educational ministry would enhance the effectiveness of the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	1	8	5	1	15
Disagree	5.6%	5.1%	7.2%	.9%	4.2%
	17	149	64	109	339
Agree	94.4%	94.9%	92.8%	99.1%	95.8%
(12 missing observations)				TOTAL	354
					100%

Most (95.8%) of the respondents indicated they agree that a coordinated educational ministry would enhance the effectiveness of the mission of the Sisters of Mercy.

Q14. The coordination of Mercy educational ministries is important enough to warrant some restructuring of the current networking (for example, a staff position at the national level).

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	7	29	19	27	82
Disagree	43.8%	19.2%	28.8%	25.2%	24.1%
	9	122	47	80	258
Agree	56.3%	80.8%	71.2%	74.8%	75.9%
(26 missing observations)				TOTAL	340
					100%

Three-fourths (75.9%) of the respondents indicated that they agree that the coordination of Mercy educational ministries is important enough to warrant some restructuring of the current networking (for example, a staff position at the national level). While MHEC members were more likely (80.8%) to agree, major superiors were less likely (56.3%).

Q16. Sisters of Mercy involved in education at all levels should work cooperatively on a regional basis.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	4	19	7	9	39
Disagree	22.2%	11.9%	10.6%	8.4%	11.1%
	14	141	59	98	312
Agree	77.8%	88.1%	89.4%	91.6%	89.9%
(15 missing observations)				TOTAL	351
					100%

The majority (88.9%) of respondents except for major superiors (77.8%) agree that Sisters of Mercy involved in education at all levels should work cooperatively on a regional basis.

Q17. At the national level, the Sisters of Mercy should take active steps to coordinate the current networking efforts in education.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	4	17	11	7	39
Disagree	23.5%	10.8%	16.7%	6.5%	11.2%
	13	140	55	101	309
Agree	76.5%	89.2%	83.3%	93.5%	88.8%
(18 missing observations)				TOTAL	348
					100%

Most (88.8%) of the respondents said they agree that at the national level, the Sisters of Mercy should take active steps to coordinate the current networking efforts in education. While MEEN members were more likely to agree (93.5%), major superiors were less likely (76.5%).

System

There were no statistically significant differences among groups in Part II of the survey as related to system.

Q20. Sisters of Mercy should form some type of educational system(s) in order to enhance a sense of national identity and to impact Catholic education.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	6	34	14	14	68
Disagree	33.3%	21.4%	20.6%	12.8%	19.2%
	12	125	54	95	286
Agree	66.7%	78.6%	79.4%	87.2%	80.8%
(12 missing observations)				TOTAL	354
					100%

Four-fifths (80.8%) of the respondents indicated that they agree that Sisters of Mercy should form some type of educational system(s) in order to enhance a sense of national identity and to impact Catholic education. MEEN members were more likely (87.2%) to agree and major superiors less likely (66.7%).

Survey Results

PART III

Part III of the survey includes statements that pertain to values, collaboration, and sponsorship of Mercy education. For each statement, respondents indicated whether the content of the statement should exist and whether it actually does exist.

There were a number of missing observations in Parts III and IV, which may indicate the respondents did not understand that they needed to answer in each column.

Summary—Part III

The following table shows the percentage of positive response (high agreement) regarding whether the particular value, collaboration, or sponsorship discussed in each question *should* exist and whether it actually *does* exist. Questions are delineated by subject area and are briefly abbreviated under the heading "content."

Also included are discrepancy ratings, the number of percentage points of difference between "should exist" and "does exist" responses, and desirability rank of the question content.

Categories include discrepancies of:

- under 10 points
- 10 to 20 points
- over 20 points

The least discrepancies (under 10 points) include:

- educational excellence
- value-centered education in Roman Catholic tradition
- needs of time and sponsorship of educational institutions.

The greatest discrepancies (over 20 points) include:

- global perspective
- fostering charism of the community
- commitment to the materially poor
- inclusion of other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses.

Summary Table—Part III

	Content	Should exist	Desira. rank	Does exist	Discrepancy under 10	Discrepancy 10-20	Discrepancy over 20
	CHARISM						
Q27	educational excellence	99.7%	1	91.5%	x		
Q28	global perspective	96.5%	5	60.2%			x
Q29	compassion for all	99.7%	1	86.5%		x	
Q30	value-centered education in RC tradition	98.3%	3	88.6%	x		
Q31	educational leadership	99.0%	2	79.6%		x	
Q32	fostering charism of community	95.3%	6	65.2%			x
Q34	uniqueness of educ. institution	93.1%	9	64.8%		x	
Q37	commitment to materially poor	94.1%	7	55.4%			x
Q38	education of women	97.7%	4	87.0%		x	
	SPONSORSHIP						
Q35	needs of time and sponsorship of educational institutions	74.0%	11	67.4%	x		
Q36	support of non-sponsored educ. ministries	85.1%	10	73.1%		x	
	NETWORKING						
Q33	inclusion of other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses	93.5%	8	53.5%			x

Charism

There were statistically significant differences among groups in seven of the nine questions in Part III that relate to charism.

Q27. Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are marked by educational excellence.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	SHOULD EXIST				
Low Agreement	0	0	0	1	1
	0%	0%	0%	1.2%	.3%
High Agreement	18	136	66	84	304
	100%	100%	100%	98.8%	99.7%
(61 missing observations)				TOTAL	305
					100%
	DOES EXIST				
Low Agreement	1	19	2	6	28
	7.1%	13.0%	2.9%	5.9%	8.5%
High Agreement	13	127	66	96	302
	92.9%	87.0%	97.1%	94.1%	91.5%
(36 missing observations)				TOTAL	330
					100%

While all but one respondent (99.7%) indicated that Mercy-sponsored institutions should be marked by educational excellence, a slightly smaller majority (91.5%) indicated that educational excellence for Mercy-sponsored institutions does exist.

A χ^2 of 7.46998 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0583) shows there to be a near significant difference in groups for the second part of the question. For members of MHEC, fewer respondents indicated high agreement with the statement (127 as opposed to 133.6 for agree), making the percentage less (87.0%) than the other groups.

Q28. Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are marked by a global perspective.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	6	1	4	11
	0%	4.2%	1.5%	4.4%	3.5%
High Agreement	18	136	66	86	306
	100%	95.8%	98.5%	95.6%	96.5%
(49 missing observations)				TOTAL	317
					100%
		DOES EXIST			
Low Agreement	7	71	22	25	125
	53.8%	50.0%	32.8%	27.2%	39.8%
High Agreement	6	71	45	67	189
	46.2%	50.0%	67.2%	72.8%	60.2%
(52 missing observations)				TOTAL	314
					100%

While most (96.5%) of the respondents indicated that Mercy sponsored institutions should be marked by a global perspective, three-fifths (60.2%) indicated a global perspective does exist. MSEA and MEEN members agreed more frequently that a global perspective does exist, and major superiors and MHEC members agreed less frequently.

A χ^2 of 14.71299 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0021) indicates there is a difference among groups in the second part of the question. The most noteworthy appear to be MEEN members (with 67 observed as opposed to 55.4 expected for agree) and MHEC members (with only 71 as opposed to 85.5 expected for agree).

Q29. Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are marked by compassion for all.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	0	0	1	1
	0%	0%	0%	1.2%	.3%
High Agreement	18	139	67	85	309
	100%	100%	100%	98.8%	99.7%
(56 missing observations)				TOTAL	310
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
			DOES EXIST		
Low Agreement	1	28	3	12	44
	7.1%	19.2%	4.5%	12.1%	13.5%
High Agreement	13	118	64	87	282
	92.2%	80.8%	95.5%	87.9%	86.5%
(40 missing observations)				TOTAL	326
					100%

While all but one respondent (99.7%) indicated high agreement that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be marked by compassion for all, a fewer number (86.5%) agreed that such compassion does exist. MSEA members (95.5%) agreed the most frequently, and MHEC members (80.8%) the least frequently.

Differences among groups is indicated in the second part of the question by a χ^2 of 9.34895 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0250). More MSEA members agreed than expected (64 as opposed to 58.0), and fewer MHEC members agreed than expected (118 as opposed to 126.3).

Q30. Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are marked by a value-centered education in the Roman Catholic tradition.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
			SHOULD EXIST		
Low Agreement	0	2	1	2	5
	0%	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%	1.7%
High Agreement	18	134	65	78	295
	100%	98.5%	98.5%	97.5%	98.3%
(66 missing observations)				TOTAL	300
					100%
			DOES EXIST		
Low Agreement	0	25	3	9	37
	0%	17.2%	4.6%	9.0%	11.4%
High Agreement	14	120	62	91	287
	100%	82.8%	95.4%	91.0%	88.6%
(42 missing observations)				TOTAL	324
					100%

The great majority of respondents (98.3%) indicated that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be marked by a value-centered education in the Roman Catholic tradition. Again, fewer respondents (88.6%) indicated such a value-centered education does exist. MHEC

members were the least likely to agree (82.8% specified high agreement), and major superiors the most likely (100%).

The fewer number of MHEC members than expected who agreed that a value-centered education does exist (120 as opposed to 128.4) is reflected by a χ^2 of 10.21682 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0168).

Q31. Sisters of Mercy in education are recognized for educational leadership.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	2	0	1	3
	0%	1.5%	0%	1.2%	1.0%
High Agreement	17	130	66	81	294
	100%	98.5%	100%	98.8%	99.0%
(69 missing observations)				TOTAL	297
					100%
		DOES EXIST			
Low Agreement	4	37	9	19	69
	26.7%	24.2%	13.2%	18.6%	20.4%
High Agreement	11	116	59	83	269
	73.3%	75.8%	86.8%	81.4%	79.6%
(28 missing observations)				TOTAL	338
					100%

While most (99.0%) respondents indicated that Sisters of Mercy in education should be recognized for educational leadership, a fewer number (79.6%) indicated the educational leadership does exist. MSEA and MEEN members were more likely to agree they believe so, and both major superiors and MHEC members were equally less likely to agree.

Q32. Collaboration among Sisters of Mercy in education fosters the charism of the community.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	8	1	6	15
	0%	5.8%	1.5%	6.3%	4.7%
High Agreement	17	130	65	89	301
	100%	94.2%	98.5%	93.7%	95.3%
(50 missing observations)				TOTAL	316
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
			DOES EXIST		
Low Agreement	7	57	20	25	109
	50.0%	40.1%	29.4%	28.1%	34.8%
High Agreement	7	85	48	64	204
	50.0%	59.9%	70.6%	71.9%	65.2%
(53 missing observations)				TOTAL	313
					100%

While most (95.3%) respondents indicated they agree that collaboration among Sisters of Mercy in education should foster the charism of the community, slightly under two-thirds (65.2%) agree the fostering does exist. Members of MSEA and MEEN were in greater agreement than major superiors and members of MHEC.

Q34. The publics served by Mercy-sponsored educational institutions recognize the uniqueness of these institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
			SHOULD EXIST		
Low Agreement	1	13	2	5	21
	5.9%	9.5%	3.0%	5.9%	6.9%
High Agreement	16	124	64	80	284
	94.1%	90.5%	97.0%	94.1%	93.1%
(61 missing observations)				TOTAL	305
					100%
			DOES EXIST		
Low Agreement	8	63	15	27	113
	57.1%	43.4%	22.1%	28.7%	35.2%
High Agreement	6	82	53	67	208
	42.9%	56.6%	77.9%	71.3%	64.8%
(45 missing observations)				TOTAL	321
					100%

Most (93.1%) respondents indicated they agree that the publics served by Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should recognize the uniqueness of these institutions. Nevertheless, under two-thirds (64.8%) said this recognition does exist. Major superiors and members of MHEC were less in agreement and members of MSEA and MEEN more in agreement.

A χ^2 of 14.15659 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0027) shows there were group differences in the second part of the

question. The major superiors and MHEC members agreed less frequently than expected (6 as opposed to 9.1 and 82 as opposed to 94.0, respectively). On the other hand members of MSEA and MEEN agreed more frequently than expected (53 as opposed to 44.1 and 67 as opposed to 60.9).

Q37. Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are known for their commitment to the materially poor.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	6	4	8	18
	0%	4.4%	6.0%	9.2%	5.9%
High Agreement	17	130	63	79	289
	100%	95.6%	94.0%	90.8%	94.1%
(59 missing observations)				TOTAL	307
					100%
		DOES EXIST			
Low Agreement	6	70	28	40	144
	46.2%	47.3%	42.4%	41.7%	44.6%
High Agreement	7	78	38	56	179
	53.8%	52.7%	57.6%	58.3%	55.4%
(43 missing observations)				TOTAL	323
					100%

The majority (94.1%) of respondents said that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be known for their commitment to the materially poor, but over half (55.4%) indicated this knowledge actually does exist.

Q38. Sisters of Mercy have a special concern for the education of women.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	0	2	0	5	7
	0%	1.4%	0%	6.0%	2.3%
High Agreement	18	137	66	78	299
	100%	98.6%	100%	94.0%	97.7%
(60 missing observations)				TOTAL	306
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	DOES EXIST				
Low Agreement	0	20	4	19	43
	0%	13.3%	5.9%	19.0%	13.0%
High Agreement	14	130	64	81	289
	100%	86.7%	94.1%	81.0%	87.0%
(34 missing observations)				TOTAL	332
					100%

While most (97.7%) respondents indicated they agree that Sisters of Mercy should have a special concern for the education of women, a fewer number (87.0%) said this concern actually does exist.

Differences in the first part of the question appear to be slight, but a near significant χ^2 of 7.59875 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0551) shows a discrepancy for members of MEEN who agreed less frequently than expected (78 as opposed to 81.1).

A χ^2 of 8.36134 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0391) shows there are also group differences for the second part of the question. In this case, members of MSEA agreed more frequently than expected (64 as opposed to 59.2), and members of MEEN less frequently (81 as opposed to 87).

Sponsorship

There was a statistically significant difference among groups in both of the two questions in Part III that relate to sponsorship.

Q35. Even if the Mercy charism is not evident, the needs of the time dictate that Sisters of Mercy continue to sponsor educational institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	SHOULD EXIST				
Low Agreement	12	30	20	17	79
	70.6%	22.1%	32.3%	19.1%	26.0%
High Agreement	5	106	42	72	225
	29.4%	77.9%	67.7%	80.9%	74.0%
(62 missing observations)				TOTAL	304
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		DOES EXIST			
Low Agreement	6	39	17	26	88
	54.5%	32.2%	32.1%	30.6%	32.6%
High Agreement	5	82	36	59	182
	45.5%	67.2%	67.9%	69.4%	67.4%
(96 missing observations)				TOTAL	270
					100%

Three-fourths (74.0%) of the respondents agreed that even if the Mercy charism is not evident, the needs of the time should dictate that Sisters of Mercy continue to sponsor educational institutions. Over two-thirds (67.4%) of the respondents agreed that the needs of the time do dictate this sponsorship.

A χ^2 of 22.13530 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0001) shows there is a difference among groups in the first part of the question. Major superiors agreed less frequently than expected (5 as opposed to 12.6) and members of MHEC and MEEN agreed more frequently (106 as opposed to 100.7 and 72 as opposed to 65.9).

Q36. Sisters of Mercy have the tradition of supporting non-sponsored educational ministries.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		SHOULD EXIST			
Low Agreement	3	20	8	10	41
	20.0%	16.0%	13.3%	13.2%	14.9%
High Agreement	12	105	52	66	235
	80.0%	84.0%	86.7%	86.8%	85.1%
(90 missing observations)				TOTAL	276
					100%
		DOES EXIST			
Low Agreement	2	45	9	25	81
	14.3%	33.3%	14.3%	28.1%	26.9%
High Agreement	12	90	54	64	220
	85.7%	66.7%	85.7%	71.9%	73.1%
(65 missing observations)				TOTAL	301
					100%

Many (85.1%) respondents said they agreed that Sisters of Mercy should have the tradition of supporting non-sponsored educational min-

istries. Just under three-fourths (73.1%) indicated they agree this tradition does exist.

A χ^2 of 9.13410 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0276) shows near significant group differences in the second part of the question. MHEC members agreed less frequently than expected (90 as opposed to 98.7), and MSEA members agreed more frequently than expected (54 as opposed to 46).

Networking

There was no statistically significant difference among groups in the one question in Part III that relates to networking.

Q33. Collaboration in education must include other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	SHOULD EXIST				
Low Agreement	1	12	2	6	21
	5.9%	8.5%	3.0%	6.1%	6.5%
High Agreement	16	130	64	92	302
	91.4%	91.5%	97.0%	93.9%	93.5%
(43 missing observations)				TOTAL	323
					100%
	DOES EXIST				
Low Agreement	7	71	33	30	141
	50.0%	51.4%	49.3%	35.7%	46.5%
High Agreement	7	67	34	54	162
	50.0%	48.6%	50.7%	64.3%	53.5%
(63 missing observations)				TOTAL	303
					100%

Most (93.5%) respondents indicated that they agree that collaboration in education must include other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses. Slightly over half (53.5%) of the respondents said they believe this inclusion actually does exist.

Survey Results

PART IV

The last section of the survey includes statements designed to test the desirability and probability of certain situations.

Summary—Part IV

The following table includes the percentage of positive response (high agreement) regarding the desirability and probability of certain situations. As in Part III, questions are delineated by subject area, and are briefly abbreviated under the heading "content."

Also included are discrepancy ratings, the number of percentage points of difference between "desirability" and "probability" responses, and a desirability rank of the question content.

Categories include discrepancies of:

- under 10 points
- 10 to 20 points
- over 20 points

The mid discrepancies (10-20 points) include:

- collaboration for lay leaders to serve in other Catholic institutions
- collaboration among current networking efforts.

The areas of greatest discrepancy (over 20 points) include:

- plan for lay leaders as administrators and teachers
- alternative educational settings
- common direction for Sisters of Mercy in education
- new educational institutions in areas of special need
- systems similar to health care ministries.

Summary Table—Part IV

	Content	Desira-bility	Desira Rank	Proba-bility	Discrepancy under 10	10-20	over 20
	SPONSORSHIP						
Q40	plan for lay leaders as administrators and teachers	92.4%	2	71.8%			x
	COLLABORATION						
Q41	collaboration for lay leaders to serve in other Catholic institutions	94.3%	1	76.4%		x	
Q43	alternative educational settings	90.8%	3	65.3%			x
Q44	collaboration among current networking efforts	89.4%	4	74.8%		x	
Q45	common direction for Sisters of Mercy in education	74.8%	7	46.7%			x
	SYSTEM						
Q39	new educational institutions in areas of special need	88.4%	5	40.6%			x
Q42	systems similar to health care ministries	77.8%	6	57.1%			x

Sponsorship

There was a statistically significant difference among groups in one question in Part IV that relates to sponsorship.

Q40. Sisters of Mercy should develop a plan to prepare lay leadership to serve as administrators and teachers in Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		DESIRABILITY			
Low Agreement	0	14	3	9	26
	0%	9.0%	4.5%	8.9%	7.6%
High Agreement	18	142	63	92	315
	100%	91.0%	95.5%	91.1%	92.4%
(25 missing observations)				TOTAL	341
					100%
		PROBABILITY			
Low Agreement	1	45	9	27	82
	7.1%	35.2%	14.3%	31.4%	28.2%
High Agreement	13	83	54	59	209
	92.9%	64.8%	86.7%	68.6%	71.8%
(75 missing observations)				TOTAL	291
					100%

While most (92.4%) of the respondents indicated it would be desirable for Sisters of Mercy to develop a plan to prepare lay leadership to serve as administrators and teachers in Mercy-sponsored educational institutions, under three-fourths (71.8%) said it was probable.

A χ^2 of 12.58834 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0056) shows group differences for the second part of the question. Fewer MHEC members agreed with the probability (83 as opposed to 91.9) and more MSEA members agreed (54 as opposed to 45.2) than were expected.

Collaboration

There was a statistically significant difference among groups in one of the four questions in Part IV that relate to collaboration.

Q41. Sisters of Mercy should collaborate with others to prepare lay teachers and administrators to serve in other Catholic institutions.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
DESIRABILITY					
Low Agreement	1	11	3	4	19
	5.6%	7.1%	4.8%	4.1%	5.7%
High Agreement	17	145	60	94	316
	94.4%	92.9%	95.2%	95.9%	94.3%
(31 missing observations)				TOTAL	335
					100%
PROBABILITY					
Low Agreement	4	39	9	17	69
	28.6%	30.2%	14.8%	19.3%	23.6%
High Agreement	10	90	52	71	223
	71.4%	69.8%	88.2%	80.7%	76.4%
(74 missing observations)				TOTAL	292
					100%

While the majority (94.3%) of respondents said it would be desirable for Sisters of Mercy to collaborate with others to prepare lay teachers and administrators to serve other Catholic institutions, slightly over three-fourths (76.4%) said it is probable. Major superiors and MHEC members indicated less agreement with the probability than members of MSEA and MEEN.

Q43. Sisters of Mercy should collaborate to sponsor alternative educational settings (for example, center for dropouts, women re-entering the job market, adult literacy programs).

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
DESIRABILITY					
Low Agreement	1	16	8	6	31
	5.6%	10.5%	12.5%	5.9%	9.2%
High Agreement	17	137	56	95	305
	94.4%	89.5%	87.5%	94.1%	90.8%
(30 missing observations)				TOTAL	336
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
PROBABILITY					
Low Agreement	3	36	25	32	96
	21.4%	28.8%	42.4%	40.5%	34.7%
High Agreement	11	89	34	47	181
	78.6%	71.2%	57.6%	59.5%	65.3%
(89 missing observations)				TOTAL	277
					100%

While four-fifths (90.8%) of the respondents indicated it would be desirable for Sisters of Mercy to collaborate to sponsor alternative educational settings, just under two-thirds (65.3%) said it is probable. Major superiors and MHEC members indicated greater agreement with the probability than members of MSEA and MEEN.

Q44. Sisters of Mercy should plan immediately for collaboration among the current networking efforts.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
DESIRABILITY					
Low Agreement	3	16	9	6	34
	17.6%	11.0%	14.3%	6.3%	10.6%
High Agreement	14	130	54	89	287
	82.4%	89.0%	85.7%	93.7%	89.4%
(45 missing observations)				TOTAL	321
					100%
PROBABILITY					
Low Agreement	3	40	17	12	72
	21.4%	31.5%	28.3%	14.1%	25.2%
High Agreement	11	87	43	73	214
	78.6%	68.5%	71.7%	85.9%	74.8%
(80 missing observations)				TOTAL	286
					100%

More respondents (89.4% as opposed to 74.8%) agreed it was more desirable than probable for Sisters of Mercy to plan immediately for collaboration among the current networking efforts.

Differences among groups in the second part of the question are indicated by a χ^2 of 8.63292 (with 3 degrees of freedom and a probability of .0346). MHEC members agreed less frequently than was expected (87 as opposed to 95) and MEEN members more frequently (73 as opposed to 63.6) regarding the probability of the collaboration.

Q45. The educational ministry of the Church would be enhanced if all Sisters of Mercy engaged in education developed a plan to focus their energies in a common direction (for example, using the Leaven materials, addressing the Year of the Homeless, special needs of women, educational excellence).

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
		DESIRABILITY			
Low Agreement	4	43	17	18	82
	23.5%	29.3%	26.6%	18.4%	25.2%
High Agreement	13	104	47	80	244
	76.5%	70.7%	73.4%	81.6%	74.8%
(40 missing observations)				TOTAL	326
					100%
		PROBABILITY			
Low Agreement	6	74	31	42	153
	42.9%	57.4%	52.5%	49.4%	53.3%
High Agreement	8	55	28	43	134
	57.1%	42.6%	47.5%	50.6%	46.7%
(79 missing observations)				TOTAL	287
					100%

While just under three-fourths (74.8%) of the respondents said it would be desirable for all Sisters of Mercy engaged in education to develop a plan to focus their energies in a common direction, under half (46.7%) said it is probable. Major superiors were the most likely to agree with the probability and MHEC members the least likely.

System

There were no statistically significant group differences in the two questions in Part IV that relate to system.

Q39. Sisters of Mercy should make a commitment to sponsor new educational institutions in areas where there is a special need (for example, an elementary school in a Hispanic neighborhood where there is no Catholic school available.)

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
DESIRABILITY					
Low Agreement	2	20	7	9	38
	11.8%	13.2%	10.9%	9.4%	11.6%
High Agreement	15	131	57	87	290
	88.2%	86.8%	89.1%	90.6%	88.4%
(38 missing observations)				TOTAL	328
					100%
PROBABILITY					
Low Agreement	10	82	36	40	168
	66.7%	65.1%	57.1%	50.6%	59.4%
High Agreement	5	44	27	39	115
	33.3%	34.9%	42.9%	49.4%	40.6%
(83 missing observations)				TOTAL	283
					100%

While many respondents (88.4%) indicated it would be desirable for Sisters of Mercy to make a commitment to sponsor new educational institutions in areas where there is a special need, only two-fifths (40.6%) (especially members of MSEA anbd MEEN) said it is probable.

Q42. Specific steps should be taken to offer Mercy-sponsored educational institutions the opportunity to form "systems" similar to those functioning in Mercy health care ministries.

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
DESIRABILITY					
Low Agreement	6	33	16	16	71
	35.3%	22.9%	26.2%	16.3%	22.2%
High Agreement	11	111	45	82	249
	64.7%	77.1%	73.8%	83.7%	77.8%
(46 missing observations)				TOTAL	320
					100%

	MS	MHEC	MSEA	MEEN	TOTAL
	PROBABILITY				
Low Agreement	8	56	23	31	118
	53.3%	46.3%	40.4%	37.8%	42.9%
High Agreement	7	65	34	51	157
	46.7%	53.7%	59.6%	62.2%	57.1%
(91 missing observations)				TOTAL	275
					100%

More respondents (77.8% as opposed to 57.1%) indicated it was more desirable than probable that specific steps should be taken to offer Mercy-sponsored educational institutions the opportunity to form "systems" similar to those functioning in Mercy health care ministries. Members of MEEN were the most likely to agree and major superiors the least likely.

Additional Crosstabs Within Questions

Crosstabs were run between corresponding sections of each question in Parts III and IV of the survey. In Part III, "should exist" and "does exist" opinions were crossed, and in Part IV, desirability and probability of situations were analyzed. Where significance was found, more high-high agreement than expected and more low-low agreement than expected were both found.

To better explain the terminology, respondents who believed a situation was both desirable and probable were classed as "high-high," and individuals who indicated a situation was neither especially desirable nor probable were classed "low-low." One who felt a situation was desirable but not especially probable would be a "high-low," and a respondent who indicated a situation was not especially desirable, but was probable was a "low-high."

Question numbers and content where significance was found are included under the pertinent headings.

PART III

- Q33 inclusion of other Catholic institutions and dioceses
- Q34 uniqueness of educational institutions
- Q35 needs of time and sponsorship of educational institutions
- Q36 support of non-sponsored educational ministries
- Q38 education of women

PART IV

All seven questions were significant.

SUMMARY

In May 1986, the members of the Sisters of Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, Mercy Secondary Education Association, and Mercy Elementary Education Association received a four-part, 45 item questionnaire on the education ministry of the Sisters of Mercy. The major superiors of the union and its nine provinces, and each of the superiors of the independent congregations also received a copy of the questionnaire.

There was a 72 percent response rate to the 507 survey instruments distributed, as Table 1 indicates.

TABLE 1

RESPONSES	NUMBER MAILED	NUMBER RECEIVED	PERCENT OF RESPONSE
Major Superiors (MS)	29	18	62.1
Mercy Higher Education Colloquium (MHEC)	224	163	72.8
Mercy Secondary Education Association (MSEA)	96	71	74.0
Mercy Elementary Education Network (MEEN)	158	114	72.2
TOTAL	507	366	72.2

What Kind of Person Answered the Questionnaire

The average sister who answered the questionnaire had been professed for 29.7 years. Since first profession usually occurred at age 21, the average person was approximately 51 years old. The higher education respondents were the oldest group with an average profession of 33 years

and the elementary education group was the youngest with an average of 26 years.

Over 90 percent of those sisters in the elementary network who were involved in schools were in parish or diocesan schools. Only 7 percent were in Mercy-sponsored elementary schools. Almost the exact opposite was true of those in the secondary association. Over 82 percent were in Mercy-sponsored schools and 16 percent were in parish or diocesan schools. Slightly lower but similar results were found in the members of the higher education colloquium, where 70 percent were in Mercy-sponsored colleges and universities and 20 percent were in other Catholic institutions.

In terms of function, 60 percent of those in the elementary network were administrators and 19 percent teachers. In the secondary association, 49 percent were administrators and 23 percent teachers. In the higher education colloquium only 22 percent were administrators and 50 percent members of the faculty.

The average number of years of ministry in formal education was 26 among all four groups with a range of 28 for higher education, 25 for secondary education, 24 for elementary education and 19 for major superiors. During the last 15 years, one-third of the respondents have served full-time in some ministry other than education. Members of the elementary network were the least likely to have done so with only one in five having been in another ministry. It is no surprise that major superiors are the most likely to have been so involved.

Formal Institutional Involvement

The questions in the other sections of the instrument were subdivided in terms of the various ways they related to the Sisters of Mercy involvement in formal educational institutions. The five categories were: charism, sponsorship, networking, collaboration and system.

Those Areas Relating to the Charism of the Sisters of Mercy

Over 99 percent of the sisters from all groups surveyed thought that personal service in education is an important contribution to the mission of the Sisters of Mercy. In regard to the materially poor, 86 percent thought that province and congregation administrators have an obligation to ensure that some Sisters of Mercy are in educational ministries that directly serve the materially poor, while 95 percent thought that they had an obligation to ensure that some people who are poor can attend Mercy-sponsored educational institutions.

A very high percentage of the respondents (94%) thought that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be known for their

commitment to this group, while only 55 percent thought that such a situation exists. There was little difference among the various groups.

Almost 100 percent of the respondents thought that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be marked by educational excellence. Most of the respondents thought that those institutions in fact are educationally excellent. The people involved in the higher education colloquium had a 13 percent discrepancy (100% against 87%) in their perceptions of what should exist and what does exist. Similar results were found in regard to whether or not Mercy-sponsored educational institutions are marked by a value-centered education in the Roman Catholic tradition. Over 98 percent of the respondents agreed that they should be and 89 percent thought that the institutions are in fact value-centered in the Catholic tradition. The group that had the highest percentage of people who thought that institutions are value-centered was secondary with 95 percent and the lowest was higher education group with 83 percent.

Almost 100 percent of the respondents thought that Mercy-sponsored educational institutions should be marked by compassion for all and 87 percent thought that they are. The group with the highest perception of compassion in Mercy educational institutions was again the secondary association (96%) and the lowest was the higher education group (81%). In regard to whether Sisters of Mercy in education should be recognized for educational leadership, 99 percent of the respondents agreed that they should, while only 80 percent thought that in fact Sisters of Mercy were recognized for their leadership. Again, the secondary group had the highest perception that such a situation exists (87%) and the congregational leadership had the lowest perception (73%). It is important that the publics served by Mercy-sponsored educational institution recognize the uniqueness of these institutions according to 93 percent of the respondents. However, only 65 percent thought that such a situation exists. Approximately three quarters of the elementary and secondary group thought that people do recognize the uniqueness of Mercy institutions, while 57 percent of the higher education people and only 43 percent of the major superiors do.

Traditionally, the Sisters of Mercy have had a special concern for the education of women and 98 percent of the respondents thought that concern should continue. The major superiors were unanimous in thinking that this concern for women continue today while only 81 percent of the people involved in elementary education thought that it does.

In regard to collaboration, 95 percent of the respondents thought that it fosters the charism of the community, while only 65 percent thought that there is sufficient collaboration among Sisters of Mercy. The secondary and elementary education people were in higher agreement

about the existence of collaboration than higher education people or major superiors.

A very high percentage (97%) thought that Mercy-sponsored eductional institution should be marked by a global perspective, while only 60 percent thought they were. Among the elementary people, 73 percent thought that there was a global perspective in Mercy-sponsored education, while 46 percent of the major superiors thought so.

Sponsorship of Institutions

A large percentage of the respondents (84%) thought that the primary responsibility for all institutional educational ministry should remain at the province or congregational level. A smaller average percentage (72%) thought that coordination of educational ministries is the responsibility of the province or congregation administration. The highest percentage (87%) came from those in province or congregation administration followed by people in elementary education at 80 percent, secondary education at 72 percent, and in higher education at 65 percent.

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (62%) thought that the future of the free-standing Mercy-sponsored educational institution is limited. At the same time, 92 percent thought that Mercy educational institutions remain one of the most effective means of evangelization available. A similarly higher percentage (88%) thought that Mercy educational institutions have kept pace with the changing needs of the church and society. The secondary education respondents were almost unanimous in this regard at 97 percent while only 77 percent of the major superiors thought so.

In a question related to all of the responses dealing with sponsorship, 80 percent thought that the Sisters of Mercy are committed to Mercy-sponsored educational institutions. The secondary education people had the highest agreement at 94 percent, while the other groups clustered slightly below the average. Almost all of the respondents (97%) thought that the Sisters of Mercy should make the preparation and incorporation of lay colleagues a priority in their educational institutions.

In a related question, 92 percent of the respondents thought that the Sisters of Mercy should develop a plan to prepare lay leadership to serve as administrators and teachers in Mercy-sponsored educational institutions. However, only 72 percent of those responding saw this as a probability. The most optimistic group was the major superiors at 93 percent followed by the secondary group at 87 percent, the elementary at 69 percent and the higher education at 65 percent.

Almost three-quarters of those responding (74%) thought that the needs of the times dictate that the Sisters of Mercy should continue

sponsor educational institutions even if the Mercy charism is not evident. There was wide disagreement among the four groups on this question with 81 percent of the elementary people and 80 percent of the higher education people agreeing with the statement. Only 68 percent of the secondary and 29 percent of the major superiors agreed. Significantly, an average of 67 percent of the groups thought that such a situation does exist, at least in some areas.

Over 85 percent of the respondents thought that the Sisters of Mercy should continue the tradition of supporting non-sponsored educational ministries, while only 73 percent thought that such a situation currently exists.

Networking Among the Sisters of Mercy

The respondents were almost unanimous (98%) in their thinking that the current networking effort of the Mercy Higher Education Colloquium, the Mercy Secondary Education Association and the Mercy Elementary Education Network should be encouraged. They were not quite as unanimous in their thinking as to how networking should be carried out. Only 44 percent thought that the coordination of educational ministry should be left to these voluntary associations. Only 29 percent thought that the coordination of educational ministry should be delayed until a decison is made regarding "Mercy Futures."

Perhaps, the reasons for the reluctance to leave the coordination to voluntary associations or to delay was because 97 percent of the respondents thought that involvement in one of the educational networks gives mutual support and encouragement from colleagues in education. Further, 96 percent thought that the reason for being a member of the Mercy network in education involves the conviction that the future will require more collaboration and planning among the various educational levels.

A very high percentage (94%) thought that collaboration in education should include other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses. Only 54 percent thought that this kind of collaboration was in fact occurring.

Collaboration Among Sisters of Mercy

That a coordinated educational ministry would enhance the effectiveness of the mission of the Sisters of Mercy was the thinking of 96% of the respondents. Three-fourths saw such coordination as sufficiently important to warrant some restructuring of the current networking, for example, the hiring of a staff person at the national level. The major superiors were significantly less in agreement with that suggestion with a response rate of 56 percent. The respondents did think that the Sisters of Mercy should plan immediately for collaboration among the current networking

efforts at a rate of 89 percent. However, a slightly lower number, 75 percent, thought that such planning was probable.

There was no question that the respondents thought that the Sisters of Mercy involved in education at all levels should work cooperatively on a regional basis; 89 percent agreed. The same percentage thought that the Sisters of Mercy should take active steps at the national level to coordinate the current networking efforts in education.

A very high percentage (94%) thought that the Sisters of Mercy should collaborate with others to prepare lay teachers and administrators to serve in other Catholic institutions and 76 percent thought that such collaboration was probable.

A high percentage of the respondents (91%) thought that the Sisters of Mercy should collaborate to sponsor alternative educational settings, for example, a center for dropouts, a center for women re-entering the job market, adult literacy programs, while only 65 percent thought that such collaboration was probable.

A slightly lower percentage of the respondents (75%) thought that the educational ministry of the church would be enhanced if all Sisters of Mercy engaged in education developed a plan to focus their energies in a common direction, for example, using the Leaven materials addressing the year of the homeless, addressing the special needs of women and striving for educational excellence. Although 75 percent thought that such a situation was desirable, only 47 percent thought that it was probable.

Sisters of Mercy Educational Systems

A high percentage of the sisters responding (81%) thought that the Sisters of Mercy should form some type of educational system in order to enhance a sense of national identity and to impact Catholic education. Although there were no statistically significant differences in their responses, the elementary education people were more likely to agree with the statement and the major superiors were least likely.

A large percentage of the respondents thought that the Sisters of Mercy should make a commitment to sponsor new educational institutions in areas where there is a special need, for example, to establish elementary schools in Hispanic neighborhoods where no Catholic school is available. Only 41 percent, however, thought that there was any probability of such an occurrence.

In regard to the establishment of a system, 78 percent of the respondents thought that specific steps should be taken to offer Mercy-sponsored educational institutions the opportunity to form systems similar to those functioning in Mercy health care ministries. Only 57 percent thought that there was any probability of such an event.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to opinions and perceptions of members of the Sisters of Mercy, general and specific recommendations are given under each of the five subject areas.

Charism

1. There should be a firm commitment by province and congregation administrations to:
   a. ensure some Sisters of Mercy are in educational ministries that directly serve the materially poor (Q10)
   b. ensure that some people who are materially poor can attend Mercy-sponsored educational institutions (Q25)
2. There should be an increased commitment in Mercy education to:
   a. serve the materially poor (Q37)
   b. strive for a global perspective for Mercy educational institutions (Q28)
   c. create for its publics an image of uniqueness of its educational institutions (Q34)
   d. increase collaboration among Sisters of Mercy in education so as to foster the charism of the community (Q32)
   e. increase recognition of Sisters of Mercy in education as educational leaders (Q31)
3. There should be continued commitment in Mercy education to:
   a. strive for compassion for all (Q29)
   b. have a special concern for the education of women (Q38)
   c. provide a value-centered education in the Roman Catholic tradition (Q30)
   d. strive for educational excellence (Q27)
   e. recognize personal service in education as an important contribution to the Sisters of Mercy mission (Q24)

Sponsorship

1. As a priority, Sisters of Mercy should develop a plan to prepare lay leadership to serve as administrators and teachers in Mercy-sponsored educational institutions, and then actually prepare and incorporate these lay colleagues. (Q26, Q40)
2. There should be continued commitment in Mercy education to:
   a. maintain the primary responsibility for all institutional educational ministries at the province/congregation level (Q9), but not necessarily exclusively, by province/congregation administration (Q12)
   b. keep pace with the changing needs of the church and society (Q22)
   c. maintain its effective ministry of evangelization (Q21).
3. There should be an increased commitment to Mercy-sponsored educational institutions by Sisters of Mercy as a province/congregation. (Q23)
4. The Sisters of Mercy may need to reexamine their commitment to the future of free-standing Mercy-sponsored educational institutions in the light of their perception that these institutions are very effective ways to minister. (Q15)
5. There should be greater support of non-sponsored educational ministries by Sisters of Mercy. (Q36)
6. The Sisters of Mercy should continue to sponsor educational institutions as the need of the time dictate, even if the Mercy charism is not evident. (Q35)

Networking

1. There should be a greater commitment to include other Catholic educational institutions and dioceses in order to promote and strengthen collaboration in education. (Q33)
2. The coordination of educational ministries should not be left to voluntary associations of Sisters of Mercy (Q11) and should not at all be delayed until a decision is made regarding "Mercy Futures." (Q13)
3. There should be continued encouragement for the current networking effort of the MHEC, MSEA, and MEEN. (Q7)
4. There should be a continued commitment to increased involvement in one of the educational networks as a source of mutual support and encouragement from other colleagues in education. (Q18)
5. There should be more collaboration and planning among the levels of education as a requirement for the future. (Q19)

Collaboration

1. Sisters of Mercy should make a firm commitment to collaborate:
   a. to sponsor alternative educational settings (Q43)
   b. immediately among the current networking efforts (Q44)
   c. with others to prepare lay teachers and administrators to serve in other Catholic institutions (as opposed to Mercy-sponsored institutions). (Q41)
2. To enhance the educational ministry of the church, Sisters of Mercy in education should further explore the possibility of developing a plan to focus their energies in a common direction. (Q45)
3. There should be a continued commitment by Sisters of Mercy to:
   a. maintain a coordinated educational ministry (Q8)
   b. work cooperatively on a regional basis (Q16)
   c. take active steps at the national level to coordinate the current networking efforts in education. (Q17)
4. Some restructuring of the current networking should be considered in the coordination of Mercy educational ministries. (Q14)

System

1. Sisters of Mercy should make a firm commitment to sponsor new educational institutions where there is a special need. (Q39)
2. Some type of educational system(s) should be formed by Sisters of Mercy in order to enhance a sense of national identity and to impact Catholic education. (Q20)
3. The opportunity to form "systems" similar to those functioning in Mercy health care ministries should be offered to Mercy-sponsored educational institutions. (Q42)